

## Transcript of Remarks By Reagan About Iran

Following is a transcript of President Reagan's address in Washington last night, as recorded by The New York Times:

Good evening. I know you've been reading, seeing and hearing a lot of stories the past several days attributed to Danish sources, unnamed observers at Italian ports and Spanish harbors, and especially unnamed Government officials of my Administration. Well, now you're going to hear the facts from a White House source, and you know my name.

I wanted this time to talk with you about an extremely sensitive and profoundly important matter of foreign policy.

For 18 months now, we have had under way a secret diplomatic initiative to Iran. That initiative was undertaken for the simplest and best of reasons.

To renew a relationship with the nation of Iran;

To bring an honorable end to the bloody six-year war between Iran and Iraq;

To eliminate state-sponsored terrorism and subversion; and

To effect the safe return of all hostages.

Without Iran's cooperation, we cannot bring an end to the Persian Gulf war; without Iran's concurrence, there can be no enduring peace in the Middle East.

### Our Dealings With Iran

For 10 days now, the American and world press have been full of reports and rumors about this initiative and these objectives.

Now, my fellow Americans, there is an old saying that nothing needs to be quickly as a rumor. So I thought it was time to speak with you directly — to tell you first-hand about our dealings with Iran. As Will Rogers once said, "Rumor travels faster, but it doesn't stay put as long as truth." So let me tell you the facts.

The charge has been made that the United States has shipped weapons to Iran as ransom payments for the release of American hostages in Lebanon. That the United States undercut its allies and secretly violated American policy against trafficking with terrorists.

Those charges are utterly false. The United States has not made concessions to those who hold our people captive in Lebanon. And we will not. The United States has not swapped hostages or planeloads of American weapons for the return of American hostages. And we will not.

### Reports Are Denied

Other reports have surfaced alleging U.S. involvement. Reports of a seafarer to Iran using Danish ships to carry American arms. Of vessels in Spanish ports being employed in secret U.S. armaments shipments.

Other reports have alleged that U.S. officials are sending spare parts and weapons to Iran by air. All these reports are quite exciting, but as far as we are concerned, not one of them is true.

During the course of our secret discussions, I authorized the transfer of small amounts of defensive weapons and spare parts for defensive purposes to Iran. My purpose was to convince Tehran that our negotiators were serious, and to give them a signal that the United States was prepared to replace the animosity between us with a new relationship. These modest deliveries, taken together, could easily fit into a single cargo plane. They could not, taken together, affect the outcome of the six-year war between Iran and Iraq — nor could they affect in any way the military balance between the two countries.

Those with whom we were in contact took considerable risks and needed a signal of our serious intent if they were to carry on and broaden the dialogue.

At the same time we undertook this initiative, we made clear that Iran must oppose all forms of international terrorism as a condition of progress in our relationship. The most significant step which Iran could take, we indicated, would be to use its influence in Lebanon to secure the release of all hostages held there.

Some progress has already been made. Since U.S. Government contact began with Iran, there's been no evidence of Iranian Government complicity in acts of terrorism against United States' hostages. Hostages have come home — and we welcome the efforts that the Government of Iran has taken in the past and is currently undertaking.

Importance of Relationship

But why, you might ask, is our relationship with Iran important to the United States?

Iran encompasses some of the most critical geography in the world. It lies between the Soviet Union and access to the warm waters of the Indian Ocean. Geography gives it a critical position from which adversaries could interfere with oil flows from the Arab states that border the Persian Gulf. Apart from geography, Iran's oil deposits are important to the long-term health of the world economy.

For these reasons, it is in our national interest to watch for change within Iran that might offer hope for an improved relationship. Until last year, there was little to justify that hope.

Indeed, we have bitter and enduring disagreements that persist today. At the heart of our quarrel has been Iran's past sponsorship of international terrorism. Iranian policy has been devoted to expelling all Western influence from the Middle East. We cannot abide that because our interests in the Middle East are vital. At the same time, we seek no territory or special position in the Persian Gulf. Iranian revolution is a fact of history; but between American and Iranian basic national interests, there need be no permanent conflict.

Since 1983, various countries have made overtures to stimulate direct contact between the U.S. and Iran. European, Near East and Far East countries have attempted to serve as intermediaries. Despite U.S. unwillingness to proceed, none of these overtures bore fruit.

With this history in mind, we were receptive last year when we were alerted to the possibility of establishing a direct dialogue with Iranian officials.

Now, let me repeat. America's longstanding goals in the region have been to help bring about a peaceful end to Soviet domination; to bring an honorable end to the bloody Iran-Iraq war; to halt the export of subversion and terrorism in the region. A major impediment to those goals has been an absence of dialogue, a cut-off in communication between us.

It's because of Iran's strategic importance and its influence in the Islamic world that we chose to probe for a better relationship between our countries.

Our discussions continued into the spring of this year. As the dialogue progressed we felt we had made, we sought to raise the diplomatic level of contacts. A meeting was arranged in Tehran. I then asked my former national security adviser, Robert McFarlane, to undertake a secret mission and give him explicit instructions. I asked him to go to Iran to open a dialogue, making stark and clear our basic objectives and disagreements.

The four days of talks were conducted in a civil fashion, and American personnel were not mistreated. Since then, the dialogue has continued

and step-by-step progress continues to be made.

Let me repeat: Our interests are clearly served by opening a dialogue with Iran and thereby helping to end the Iran-Iraq war. That war, dragged on for more than six years, with no prospect of a negotiated settlement. The slaughter on both sides has been enormous, and the adverse economic and political consequences for that vital region of the world have been growing. We sought to establish communication with both sides in that senseless struggle, so that we could assist in bringing about a ceasefire and, eventually, a settlement. We have sought to be even-handed by working with both sides and with other interested nations to prevent widening of the war.

This sensitive undertaking has entailed great risk for those involved. There is no question but that we could never have begun or continued this dialogue had the initiative been disclosed earlier. Due to the publicity of the past week, the entire initiative is very much at risk today.

Precedent for Reagan Action

There is ample precedent in our history for this kind of secret diplomacy. In 1971, then-President Nixon sent his national security adviser on a secret mission to China. In that case, as today, there was a basic requirement for discretion and for a sensitivity to the situation in the nation we were attempting to engage.

Since the welcome return of former hostage David Jacobsen, there has been unprecedented speculation and countless reports that have not only been wrong, but have been potentially dangerous to the hostages and destructive of the opportunity before us. The efforts of courageous people like Terry Waite have been jeopardized. Our sensitive have been false rumors and erroneous reports that the risks of remaining silent now exceed the risks of speaking out. And that's why I decided to address you tonight.

It's been widely reported, for example, that the Congress, as well as top executive branch officials, were circumvented. Although the efforts we undertook were highly sensitive and involvement of Government officials was limited to those with a strict need to know, all appropriate Cabinet officers were fully consulted. The actions I authorized were and continue to be in full compliance with Federal law, and the relevant committees of Congress are being and will be fully informed.

Efforts to End War

Another charge is that we have tilted toward Iran in the Gulf War. This, too, is false. I have consistently condemned the violence on both sides. We have consistently sought a negotiated settlement that preserves the territorial integrity of both nations. The overtures we've made to the Government of Iran have not been a shift to supporting one side over the other. Rather, it has been a diplomatic initiative to gain some degree of access and influence within Iran — as well as Iraq — and to bring about an honorable end to that bloody conflict. It is in the interests of all parties in the Gulf region to end that war as soon as possible.

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## Reagan Defends Iran Deals And Denies Hostage Trade

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the return of American hostages. And we will not.

"A Firm Policy"

"Our Government has a firm policy not to capitulate to terrorist demands," Mr. Reagan continued. "That 'no concessions' policy remains in force — in spite of the wildly speculative and false stories about arms for hostages and alleged ransom payments."

"We did not, repeat, did not trade weapons or anything else for hostages," Mr. Reagan said. "Those who think we have 'gone soft' on terrorism should take up the question with Colonel Qaddafi!"

"We have not, nor will we, capitulate to terrorists," Mr. Reagan said.

Seems Sombre During Speech

Mr. Reagan appeared somber during his 15-minute speech, which represented an effort to justify potential American ties to Iran as part of the broader national security needs of the United States.

In this context, Mr. Reagan seemed to be arguing the United States policy was intact because his Administration had not dealt directly with radical groups holding the American hostages, but with the Iranian Government, which had leverage over these groups.

"Our interests are clearly served by opening a dialogue with Iran and thereby helping to end the Iran-Iraq war," Mr. Reagan said.

The President's speech was apparently designed to respond to a wave of bipartisan Congressional criticism that secret American arms shipments to Iran had undercut Administration policy that ostensibly sought a world-wide embargo against weapons to Tehran. But he did not cite Congressional opposition to such as press reports that he said had distorted "the facts."

Mr. Reagan made his speech tonight reluctantly, according to aides, and largely because of reports that have deeply embarrassed the White House about the establishment of secret contacts with Iran and the supply of American military equipment to Tehran.

Publicly, Washington has long called for a worldwide arms embargo against Iran and Iraq, which have been at war for more than six years.

An angry Mr. Reagan told reporters earlier in the day at the White House, "You've made it all necessary for me to speak out at this time because I've never heard such dissemination of misinformation since I've been here as has been going on for the last several days." He made that comment at a meeting with United States Ambassadors on the Administration's plans to curb drug abuse.

"Set the Record Straight"

Larry Speakes, the White House spokesman, said Mr. Reagan decided to make the speech because he "feels it is appropriate in view of all the speculation, some of it inaccurate, that he wants to set the record straight for the American people once and for all."

The decision to make the speech also marked an end to a sharp debate within the Administration in which Secretary of State George P. Shultz and Donald T. Regan, the White House chief of staff, argued forcefully for a speech to end the wave of criticisms about the secret United States arms shipments to Iran. The White House national security adviser, Vice Adm. John M. Poindexter, urged Mr. Reagan not to make the speech, according to Administration officials.

Mr. Reagan did not mention the reported role of Israel, which is reported to have sent arms to Iran and is said to have played a role in reopening the Administration's contacts with Tehran.

The President made no mention of the European allies, which have been under intense American pressure to take steps against countries supporting terrorism and have in recent days criticized the Administration's Iran policy.

Sent McFarlane to Iran

Mr. Reagan acknowledged that he sent Robert C. McFarlane, his former national security adviser, on a secret four-day mission to Iran last spring to "raise the diplomatic level of contacts" with Iranian officials.

"Since then, the dialogue has continued, and step-by-step progress continues to be made," the President said.

The Government Democrats, meanwhile, called for hearings on the Administration's contacts with Iran and Iraq, and also called for a "no arms" policy, despite the White House disclaimer, that the United States traded arms for hostages.

Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Democrat of New York, said Mr. Reagan should ask for the resignation of Admiral Poindexter, the national security adviser, and a central figure in the Iranian operation. But Admiral Poindexter told reporters at the White House, "I have no plans to resign."

The House majority leader, Jim Wright, Democrat of Texas, said, "I think the truth is that the arms were delivered to Iran, and the truth is, of course, that some hostages have been released."

Such an assertion was termed "absolutely incorrect" by a senior Administration official who briefed a group of reporters at the White House this afternoon.

Contacts began 18 months ago. The official said that United States contacts with moderate elements in Iran began about 18 months ago, that Mr. Reagan signed a directive last January authorizing the clandestine efforts and that Mr. McFarlane, the former national security adviser, made a secret trip to Tehran in May to press American contacts there.

The official repeatedly asserted that the quantity of arms was relatively small and would have no impact on the war between Iran and Iraq. "All of the material that we have transferred to Iran, if you put all of it together, it could be placed in a single cargo aircraft," the official said. "It is all defensive material."

Although the official declined to specify what the "defensive material" was, such examples as surface-to-air missiles, antiaircraft weapons and radar could be categorized as defensive. The official denied that spare parts for F-4s were sent from the United States.

'Show of Good Faith'

The official said the decision to send military equipment was designed as a "show of good faith" to factions in Iran that "would like to see a better relationship with the United States."

The official added, "The elements that we have been dealing with have some influence over the Hezbollah, Hezbollah, or the Party of God, is a pro-Iranian Islamic fundamentalist group that seized some hostages in Lebanon."

The President has stated that Administration policy with regard to terrorism and not negotiating with the captors remain intact, the official said. "It's based on the fact that indeed we have not dealt with these captors."

The official said the so-called moderate Iranian elements in contact with the United States were informed that the major obstacle to progress in any form of constructive relationship with the United States depends on their stopping terrorism and also depend on our getting the hostages back."

Mr. de Borchgrave published the text after Mr. Chirac initially questioned the content of an article based on the interview, in the interest of Mr. Chirac's French newspaper, L'Express, having told him that the El Al affair had been staged by Israeli intelligence agents and Syrian dissident officials.

Mr. de Borchgrave said he did not make clear whether he shared the theory himself. The West Germans have savored the controversy.

Mr. Baudouin, the spokesman, said today that he was pleased the text of the interview had been published, because it was a coherent light. But he accused Mr. de Borchgrave of pretending to switch off his tape recorder at the start of the interview while in fact leaving it to record.

Paris Admits Accuracy  
Of the Chirac Interview

PARIS, Nov. 13 (Reuters) — The office of Prime Minister Jacques Chirac, in a reversal, today conceded the accuracy of an interview in which he said he was told a plot to blow up an El Al jet was hatched by Israeli agents and Syrian dissidents.

However, Mr. Chirac's spokesman, Denis Baudouin, in confirming the authenticity of an interview with the Washington Times, also accused the newspaper's editor, Arnaud de Borchgrave, of having violated journalistic ethics in the "off the record" meeting.

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## Many Laws Bear on Iran Arms Shipments

WASHINGTON, Nov. 13 (AP) — Several laws bear on American arms shipments to Iran, and the question of whether any have been violated has still to be resolved by legal experts.

In 1979, when Iran seized Americans as hostages, President Carter directed that all arms exports to that country be banned under authority of the Arms Export Control Act.

At the same time, a Carter order froze Iranian assets in the United States, and that order has been renewed each year by President Reagan, the last time just this week. Iran and the United States, however, are nearing an agreement on the return of \$500 million — the balance left in a \$3.667 billion account — in Iranian funds held by the Federal Reserve Bank since 1981.

There also are requirements under amendments to the National Security Act and the Foreign Assistance Act for reports to Congress about dealings with Iran.

Under the arms export act, Congress must be notified about all sales or transfers of major items of military equipment with a total value of more than \$14 million and of all military articles if the value exceeds \$50 million.

The act also requires United States approval for any resale or transfer of American-made military material from a bona fide recipient to a third country. If Israel served as a conduit for shipment of arms and spare parts to Iran, Mr. Reagan's approval might have been sufficient if the value did not exceed the monetary limits.

Other laws may also apply. Covert actions are to be reported to Congress under the 1982 Boland amendments to the National Security Act of 1947. An Executive Order issued by President Reagan in 1981 requires the Director of Central Intelligence to report to Congress whenever there has been intelligence gathering out of the normal.

The amendments to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 require specific approval by the President of money appropriated to the C.I.A. that are used for covert activities.

An 1968 law still is on the books giving the President wide latitude in winning the release of hostages. The law, which deals with protection of American citizens abroad, requires the President to report his efforts to Congress "as soon as practicable."

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## Where will you find superheated water that won't boil?

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